

They were the dark rhetoric  
of Marcuse  
come to play on commodities  
of Spring  
before Mark Rudd or Guevera  
's end.  
Swept wheat  
hair like the fields of Karelia.  
We lead bullocks through the pastures  
of hair floating over the window boxes  
and all the faces of the people  
seemed to come undone.

For Sandra Hochman

Poetess:  
pitted against a nest  
of virgins  
(mostly hardwoods) she  
draws in fists of honey  
making bees:  
hides them in the wreaked grains.  
A hive transported  
broken through Poughkeepsie  
to the dark stone country  
west of Troy and Saratoga  
becomes herself:  
the medieval carnival:  
Queen of diseased oak  
she sings like Sappho.

-- Ben Pleasants

Beverly Hills, Calif.

John XXIII

Pope John you fox you foxed them good.  
What they had in mind was someone  
dying, fat, and full of gratitude,  
a papal puppet for the interim.

And you were all these things, you sly  
old saint, so grateful to be simply  
under earth's rotunda, corpulent  
with years of pasta contentment,

and dying surely dying just to see  
what death is like. The perfect man  
for the job, a comfort to duennae  
and the cortege of cardinals. A gull.